

**STATEMENT OF SUE MASICA, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 2034 AND H.R. 394, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO EVALUATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COLONEL JAMES BARRETT FARM IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, AND ASSESS THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF INCLUDING THE FARM IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM AS PART OF THE MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**April 6, 2006**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 2034 and H.R. 394, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to evaluate the significance of the Colonel James Barrett Farm in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and to assess the suitability and feasibility of including the farm in the National Park System as part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, and for other purposes. The Department supports the enactment of this bill.

If enacted, the bill would direct the Secretary to conduct a boundary study to evaluate the significance of Barrett's Farm, and to assess the suitability and feasibility of including the Farm as part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, a unit of the National Park System. The study, which is to be completed within two years after funds are made available for it, is to include an analysis of Barrett's Farm's significance with respect to the Revolutionary War. It must also analyze opportunities for public enjoyment of the property as part of Minute Man National Historical Park, and any operational,

management, and private property issues that must be considered if the farm is added to the park. In addition, the study must include a determination by the Secretary of the feasibility of administering the farm as part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, taking into account its size, configuration, costs and any other appropriate factors, as well as an evaluation of other alternatives for management and resource protection of the property.

The Colonel James Barrett Farm is located at 448 Barrett's Mill Road, Concord, Massachusetts, two miles from the town center and from Minute Man National Historical Park. The Barrett House was the home of Colonel James Barrett (1710-1779), commander of Middlesex County militia and one of the leading figures in the events that began the American Revolution in April, 1775. The property comprises six acres and includes land that has been farmed continuously since the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as the historic 1705 farm house. Much of the surrounding acreage is owned by the Town of Concord and managed as agricultural conservation land.

The proposed study area of six acres is coterminous with the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places and includes abutting properties that once were part of the original farm. In addition, the National Park Service recommends that approximately 40 acres of the town-owned lands which directly abut the farm (and which were once part of the original farm) also be included in the study area. Inclusion of these lands in the study area would allow the NPS to explore the options for increased collaboration with the town and for ways to support long-term management should

Barrett's Farm be acquired and managed by the National Park Service in the future. The Town of Concord has expressed its support for inclusion of these resources in the study.

Colonel Barrett's Farm was a major hiding place for the colonists' stores of arms and ammunition. It was the farthest point that was targeted by the British expeditionary force sent from Boston to seize these weapons. The British troops headed there on April 19, 1775 but found nothing, the residents having been alerted by Paul Revere several days earlier, in time to hide muskets, cannons and powder in the nearby fields. On that same day, Colonel Barrett ordered the advance to Concord's North Bridge that resulted in "the shot heard 'round the world" and the start of the Revolutionary War.

Minute Man National Historical Park encompasses 971 acres and includes the North Bridge, Lexington Green and the Battle Road trail, where the British both advanced and retreated. Including Barrett's Farm within the boundaries of Minute Man National Historical Park appears to offer many opportunities for resource preservation and interpretation. Barrett's Farm was the impetus for the British excursion to Concord on April 18, 1775 and the vigorous work of Colonel Barrett and his militia was the key reason for the British retreat following the encounter at the North Bridge.

The farm was considered for inclusion when Minute Man National Historical Park was established in 1959, but was at that time in private ownership and not available for acquisition. It has since been purchased by Save Our Heritage, a local nonprofit

organization, which seeks to preserve it. The group has been working closely with the Town of Concord and has raised \$2 million to acquire and stabilize the property.

We believe that this study would allow the Secretary to explore further the feasibility of adding this important historical property to the National Park System.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.